United Nations ST/IC/2002/62

Secretariat

25 September 2002

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2003 competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category of staff members from other categories**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to provide information to staff members in the General Service and related categories of the Secretariat who wish to take the 2003 competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category, in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2001/8 of 2 November 2001.

2. The 2003 competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category is scheduled to be held on 4 and 5 February 2003 (written component) and in June/July 2003 (oral component). For candidates convoked in two occupational groups, the two specialized papers are administered on the same day.

Selection of posts

3. The Office of Human Resources Management, taking into account information provided by departments and offices at all duty stations, has established projections of P-2-level posts subject to geographical distribution that will be or are expected to become available in the 12 months preceding placement. The total number of posts to be selected for the 2003 competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category will be approximately 10 per cent of the number of P-2 posts subject to geographical distribution that became available during the previous calendar year.

4. On the basis of these projections of organizational needs, the Central Examinations Board has selected the following occupational groups for which the examination is to be held:

(a) **Economics**, which covers such work as that of economic affairs officers, transnational affairs officers and international development officers;

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2003.

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(b) **Finance**, which covers such work as that of accountants and auditors;

(c) **Information technology**, which covers such work as that of computer specialists, Internet web-site masters and information technology analysts;

(d) **Legal affairs**, which covers such work as that of legal officers;

(e) **Library**, which covers such work as that of librarians and records management officers;

(f) **Nursing**, which covers such work as that of Head Nurse;

(g) **Security**, which covers such work as that of security officers;

(h) **Statistics**, which covers such work as that of statisticians and of related work in areas such as economics, environment, social statistics, demography and trade.

Eligibility

5. A staff member serving in the General Service and related categories, including the Field Service category up to and including the FS-5 level, may apply to take a competitive examination in a particular occupational group, provided that he or she:

(a) Has a minimum of five years of continuous service in the Secretariat by 31 December 2002, excluding any service in separately administered funds or programmes, except as otherwise provided in paragraph 6 below;

(b) Has a satisfactory record of performance;

(c) Holds a United Nations letter of appointment valid at least until 31 August 2003;

(d) Meets the minimum eligibility criteria set out in paragraphs 7 to 9 of the present information circular.

6. Short breaks in service may be allowed at the discretion of the Central Examinations Board. Staff members who had previously served continuously for at least five years with the United Nations Secretariat, had resigned and, by 31 December of 2002, would have served continuously for at least three years since their reappointment will also be considered eligible, provided that they meet the other requirements.

Minimum eligibility criteria

7. Staff members are invited to apply for one of the occupational groups in which the examination is to be held in 2003. The minimum eligibility criterion is a first-level university degree, equivalent to a bachelor's degree, broadly related to the occupational group for which the candidate has applied. Detailed requirements are as follows:

(a) **Economics**: First-level university degree in macroeconomics, microeconomics, international trade, political economy, econometrics, development

planning and analysis, economic development and growth, and public economics. Training in fundamental economic theory is a basic requirement;

(b) **Finance**: First-level university degree in accounting, actuarial sciences, auditing, business administration (with evidence of having studied modules in auditing, accounting or finance), finance, management (with courses in accounting, auditing or finance) and international business. Any of the following experiences would be an advantage: two to three years of working experience in a business or governmental environment in an accounting, budgeting or financial capacity; two to three years of working experience in a management auditing/consulting firm; two to three years of working experience in an engineering or project management capacity evaluating cost/benefit elements or capital project management;

(c) **Information technology**: First-level university degree in computer science (engineering, programming, software development or theory), information technology, information management, informatics, telecommunications and artificial intelligence. For candidates who have no first-level university degree in any of the above-mentioned fields but have at least two years of professional experience in these fields, the degree may be substituted by one of the following first-level university degrees: electrical engineering, electronics, mathematics, physics, robotics or statistics;

(d) **Legal affairs**: First-level university degree in law, public law, international law, law of the sea, human rights law and international humanitarian law. Any of the following experiences would be an advantage: two to three years of practical experience in the field of law; or two to three years of international working experience in legal fields relevant to the work of the Organization;

(e) **Library**: First-level university degree in library or library and information science;

(f) **Nursing**: Registered nurse and at least a first-level (B.S.) degree in nursing. Owing to the special technical nature of the occupation of nursing, at least five to seven years of responsible experience in the application of nursing skills are also required;

(g) **Security**: First-level university degree, equivalent to a bachelor's degree, in security or in a field directly related to security. Owing to the special technical nature of the occupation of security, at least five years of service as United Nations security officer in a post with functions directly related to security are also required;

(h) **Statistics**: First-level university degree in statistics, mathematics, economics with a specialization in econometrics, social sciences with a specialization in sociometrics, and demography. Any of the following experiences would be an advantage: one to two years of working experience with a national statistical office; or one to two years of working experience in environmental, social or economics statistics.

Staff members who have a degree or degrees broadly related to two occupational groups offered in 2003 may apply to take the examination in each of these two occupational groups.

8. Staff members who have served in the Secretariat for at least five years by 31 December 1989 will be allowed to take the examination in any one of the occupational groups in which the examination is held in 2003, upon providing

evidence of post-secondary academic qualifications. Should such staff members hold a first-level university degree or degrees broadly related to the occupational groups offered in 2003, they may apply to take the examination in a second occupational group to which their degree is broadly related (see para. 7).

9. Staff members should provide relevant documents, as required, as evidence in support of their meeting the minimum eligibility criteria described in this section and the eligibility requirements listed in paragraph 5.

Applications

10. Staff members who wish to submit an application should complete the application form in the annex to the present information circular and submit it with all required documentation to the Central Examinations Board by 8 November 2002. The staff member's most recent performance report must also be submitted with the application.

Format and substance of the examination

Written examination

11. The written examination accounts for 80 per cent of the total number of points available for each occupational group and consists of two parts: a general paper (four hours) and a specialized paper (four hours) related to the occupational group concerned.

12. Part I, the general paper, consists of three sections with a total coefficient of 30 per cent:

(a) Section 1 will test the candidate's ability to analyse a problem. The section consists of a text and questions based on the text. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 20 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination;

(b) Section 2 consists of a text of a speech or a report. Candidates will be asked to summarize the text, reducing it to approximately one third of its length. The summary will be evaluated for comprehension, accuracy and clarity of thought. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 20 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination;

(c) Section 3 tests the candidate's knowledge of international relations. Candidates may choose to answer any 10 among 12 questions offered. The time recommended for this section is 1 hour and 20 minutes and it has a coefficient of 10 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination.

13. Part II, the specialized paper, which tests the candidate's substantive knowledge of the occupational group concerned, normally consists of 3 essay-type exercises and 10 short-answer type questions. All essays and questions are mandatory. The total time recommended for this part is 4 hours and it has a coefficient of 50 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination.

14. Some candidates may be required to sit for a special language test, as stated in administrative instruction ST/AI/2001/8. This test consists of two parts covering,

respectively, reading and writing abilities. The duration of the test is 2 hours and 30 minutes. Candidates who have not demonstrated proficiency in one of the working languages of the Secretariat (English or French) in the special language test or in the drafting test will be considered as not having met the standard required in the examination.

Oral examination

15. Candidates may be convoked for an oral examination in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/2001/8. Candidates serving at duty stations away from Headquarters will take this part of the examination either in New York or at another location, depending on circumstances. At locations away from Headquarters, the oral examination will be conducted by a board consisting of at least three members of the relevant board of examiners, including an ex officio member.

16. The oral examination will consist of two separate exercises: an oral presentation and a group exercise. The oral examination will constitute 20 per cent of the marks of the examination process. The oral presentation, designed to evaluate the candidates' ability to communicate and convey their views in a clear, understandable and concise way, will account for 8 per cent of the points assigned to the examination and the group exercise will account for 12 per cent of those points. The four performance dimensions measured by the group exercise, initiative, adaptability, negotiating skills and potential for leadership, will each account for 3 per cent of the marks assigned to the examination.

17. Candidates may make the individual oral presentation in English, in French or in one of the official languages of the regional commissions other than English or French. In the group exercise, candidates must converse in either English or French. Language will be taken into consideration when constituting groups for the group exercise.

Oral presentation

18. For all occupational groups, the standardized format of the oral presentation will include a 10-minute presentation of a general nature on a topic broadly related to the occupational group concerned. Each candidate will draw two topics at random from a selection prepared in advance and choose one of the topics. The candidate will then have 15 minutes to prepare an oral presentation on the selected topic. Following the presentation, the Board of Examiners will have an opportunity to ask three questions for clarification or amplification of any of the points made by the candidate. After the presentation and related questions, the Board will ask five other questions of a general nature, also broadly related to the occupation, and two questions for clarification or amplification of any points made during the five additional questions.

19. The presentation and responses to questions of the oral presentation will be evaluated in accordance with a rating scale designed to assess the candidates' ability to comprehend topics and questions, to communicate with others and to present and illustrate with examples his or her views in a clear, logical and understandable way. In order to ensure consistency, the marking will be done separately by each member of the board immediately after each oral presentation and without relation to the grading of the written examination.

Group exercise

20. The group exercise is a leaderless group, non-assigned role exercise. As designed for the oral examination, it will measure the competencies of initiative, adaptability, negotiating skills and potential for leadership. Candidates will be assigned to groups ranging in size from three to six members. Groups may be constituted of candidates drawn from one or several occupational groups. If a candidate is convoked to the oral examination for two occupational groups, scores obtained in the group exercise portion of the oral examination will be applied to both occupational groups.

21. The group exercise is a problem-solving exercise in which a scenario describing a series of problems is presented to the group. The group is allowed a specified length of time to analyse and discuss the problems. The members must arrive at a solution to each problem presented in the exercise as a group, through group discussion. Once the solutions have been reached, depending upon the specific requirements of the exercise, a presentation/discussion/report will be generated to be presented to the board members.

22. Candidates participating in the group exercise will be evaluated by a special board consisting of members who have received training in the group exercise methodology. The training will focus on teaching the members to identify, observe, assess, rate and record specific behaviours related to the above-mentioned performance dimensions. During the group exercise, the board members will observe each group member's behaviour relative to the performance dimensions and take notes on each candidate's behaviour. Upon completion of the exercise, the board members will rate, on predetermined scales, each candidate's behaviour according to the appropriate performance dimensions. The board members will discuss their ratings and, where discrepancies in rating occur, will reconcile ratings. After reconciliation takes place, a total score will be calculated on the basis of the reconciled ratings.

Annex

Application for the competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category of staff members from other categories

(United Nations Secretariat staff members only)

All correspondence with candidates will be conducted on the basis of the information given. It is the responsibility of the candidates to inform the Secretary of the Central Examinations Board of any changes in the information indicated in the application form.

N.B. The deadline for receipt of applications by the Central Examinations Board (United Nations Headquarters) is 8 November 2002.

Section I. Personal data

Please type or print legibly.

Last name (family name): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

First name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Nationality: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Sex: [F] [M] Index No.:[a] | | | | | | | Category: | | Present level: | |

Type of appointment: Fixed-term: [ ] Probationary: [ ] Permanent: [ ]

Expiration or review date: Day: | | Month: | | Year: | | | |

Date of birth: Day: | | Month: | | Year: | | | |

Date of entry in United Nations Secretariat: Day: | | Month: | | Year: | | | |

Date of latest PAS: Day: | | Month: | | Year: | | | |

Please submit a copy of your latest performance evaluation (PAS) with your application.

Main language (Mother tongue):

Please check below the occupational group (or two occupational groups, if applicable) for which you wish to take the examination.

Economics _____ Finance _____ Information technology _____ Legal affairs _____

Library _____ Nursing _____ Security _____ Statistics_____

Duty station: _____

Department/Office: _____
(write in full)

E-mail address: _____

Room No.: _____ Telephone No.:_____

Home telephone No.:_____ (Because of time differences at duty stations away from Headquarters, candidates are requested to indicate their home telephone number in order to facilitate communications of an urgent nature.)

1. Have you applied to take previous G to P examination(s)? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Were you convoked to sit for previous G to P examinations? No ☐

If yes, when? 1980 ☐ 1982 ☐ 1983 ☐ 1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐
1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ 1992 ☐ 1993 ☐ 1994 ☐ 1995/96 ☐ 1997 ☐
1998 ☐ 1999 ☐ 2000 ☐ 2002 ☐

Which occupational group(s)? _____

If yes, did you actually take the examination? No ☐

Yes, in: 1980 ☐ 1982 ☐ 1983 ☐ 1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐
1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ 1992 ☐ 1993 ☐ 1994 ☐ 1995/96 ☐ 1997 ☐
1998 ☐ 1999 ☐ 2000 ☐ 2002 ☐

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* Usually appears on your monthly salary statement or grounds pass; if not, please contact your Personnel Officer to obtain your number.

Section II. Education

List your qualifications at the secondary and post-secondary levels, indicating the certificate, diploma or degree received. All candidates, including those who have applied for or taken a previous G to P examination must forward a copy of their university degree or diploma, including, when available, a copy of an up-to-date university transcript.

Written proof of post-secondary education must be attached to this application. (Send photocopies; do not send any originals.) Failure to provide proof will mean that the application will be disregarded.

Certificate, diploma or degree *Exact title in original language. For work towards a degree, please list number of credits*	***Institution name*** ***Place*** ***Country***	***Period of study*** *Month* *Year*	***Description of courses or main field of study***
Secondary studies		From: 19	
		To: 19	
Post-secondary studies		From: 19	
		To: 19	
		From: 19	
		To: 19	
		From: 19	
		To: 19	
		From: 19	
		To: 19	

If you need more space, attach additional pages.

Section III. Languages

If you successfully passed a United Nations language proficiency examination (LPE), please indicate the year you obtained the certificate. If you did not pass the LPE, indicate your level of ability below, using the following code letters: A = fluently, B = quite easily, C = not easily.

If you are or have been enrolled in any language courses, please indicate the institution and the highest level completed or the diploma obtained.

Language	*LPE year*	*Read*	*Understand*	*Speak*	*Write*	*Institution and diploma (period(s) of study)*

Section IV. Occupation(s) for which you are applying

Name _____

Office _____

Room No. _____

Duty station _____

Country _____

Sex: [F] [M] Index No.: [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

Please check below the occupational group(s) for which you wish to take the examination. You may apply for no more than two occupational groups.

Economics _____ Finance _____ Information technology _____ Legal affairs _____

Library _____ Nursing _____ Security _____ Statistics_____

Indicate the language in which you wish to take the examination:

(a) Written part, general paper, sections 1 and 3 [ ]

(b) Written part, general paper, section 2 [ ]

(c) Written part, specialized paper [ ]

(d) If you plan to take the portion of the oral examination dealing with ability to communicate in a working language of one of the regional commissions other than in English or French, please indicate the language [ ]

(Write language in full for each part of the examination in appropriate boxes.)

If you plan to write section 2 in a working language of a regional commission, other than English or French, please indicate your choice of language for the special language test:

English [ ]

French [ ]

(Check ONE only)

Main language (Mother tongue): [ ]

Highest educational level:

High school [ ] Post-secondary [ ] BA [ ] MA [ ] Other (Ph.D., etc.) [ ]

Section V. Certification of accuracy of information provided

Fully completed applications, together with proof of post-secondary education and of language ability (if you did not pass the language proficiency examination or are not enrolled in a United Nations course), must be received by the Central Examinations Board no later than **8 November 2002** in a sealed envelope marked Confidential, addressed to:

Central Examinations Board secretariat
Office of Human Resources Management — Room S-2590A
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017 USA
Fax: (212) 963-3683

For duty stations outside New York, please fax whenever possible. Where a fax machine is not available, please use the United Nations pouch.

Important: Applications that are incomplete or do not include essential information may be rejected.

I certify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge and understand that any misrepresentation would lead to my elimination from the examination and to possible disciplinary action. I further understand that it is my responsibility to report immediately any changes in the foregoing information to the Central Examinations Board.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

List of enclosures: _____

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☐ Most recent performance evaluation report

Competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category of staff members from other categories

The information below will be used as your mailing label; please print or write legibly. You are responsible for immediately reporting to the Secretary of the Central Examinations Board any subsequent changes in duty station, either prior to or during the examination process.

Central Examinations Board stamp

Name _____

Office _____

Room No. _____

Duty station _____

Country _____

This portion will be returned to you as an acknowledgement of receipt of your application.